

served at the *Frauenhaus*—and to prove, how desirable and important the publication of this mediæval treasure will be to the professor, as well as any art-searcher. Conjointly with his friend, Architect Mr. K. Perrin, Dr. Schneegans has for several years past collected and prepared every thing for this undertaking. All plans, traced masterly by Perrin, exhibit in their complete correctness real *fac-similes*, in which even the character and the sentiments of the originals are faithfully rendered. The publication of these drawings will take place under the auspices of the Common Council of Strasburg. The engraving is entrusted to one of the ablest Paris artists, and all measures have been taken for making this work worthy as well of the great German master and his followers at the minster, as of this sublime monument of German art and might; worthy, in fine, of the body under whose protection it will appear.

THE POWERS OF THE OFFICIAL REFEREES.

MR. EDITOR,—Your report of the case, *Edwards v. King*, respecting the eaves and cornice of a certain dwelling-house in Canonbury-park, wherein the official referees certify, that so long as such building shall remain so distant, 30 feet from any other building, they approve and permit the said eaves, although contrary to the Act and to their own directions—is another of the cases referred to in your number of the 5th of September.

Such approval and permission are *invalid*, unless confirmed by the consent of the Commissioners of Works and Buildings (c. 12). In your note to your correspondents, of September 5th, already alluded to, you say that the eightieth section gives the referees "a discretion in the relaxation of the fixed rules and regulations of the Act." Section eighty does no such thing; it merely states in the preamble, that "for the purpose of providing for the appointment of competent official referees to exercise a discretion," be it enacted that they be appointed according to certain regulations. But the mode in which they are to carry out their powers is contained in other clauses, and it is under cl. 12 that modifications come; wherein it is shown they can do nothing of that sort (modification) without the consent of the Commissioners of Works and Buildings. In law and in practice such proceedings on the part of the official referees are bad. There is no doubt that modification is required, and would be beneficial, but let it be general and not partial; according to the legal form, and not by a side wind.

Under the decision above quoted, how can any district surveyor require adherence to the Act, or compliance with the general instructions of the official referees as to dripping eaves?—May not a builder very reasonably urge, that this last quoted decision settles the question, and that it would be only capricious officiousness on the part of the district surveyor, to require any other mode of constructing the eaves wherever one building remains 30 feet from any other building, although directly contrary to the Buildings Act, and to the general decisions of the official referees? The public and the surveyors are harassed by such irregularity of procedure.

A CONSTANT READER.

Sept. 29th, 1846.

FALL OF RAILWAY BRIDGES, ARCHES, TUNNELS, AND EMBANKMENTS.

THERE has been a singular and unworkmanlike disturbance, of late, in various of those railway works at present hurrying to a close. We have very recently had occasion to notice several cases which, had they occurred on the continent, would have probably been attributed to the immature condition of the science of architecture, or the art of building, in general, there; and we regret to be obliged to chronicle a new accumulation of still more recent instances both in the northern and southern divisions of our immaculate island. In the north, at the Aberdeen railway works, near Aberdeen, several arches of the inclined plane, near the *Derna* brewery, having been completed, and the supports taken away, the week before last, three of them gave way, burying amongst the stones, bricks, and rubbish, a

number of the workmen, seven of whom were instantaneously killed, and four others severely bruised. The immediate cause is not known. The building was only level with the key-stone, and the arches are said to have burst in the middle. Mr. Cubitt, the consulting engineer, has been sent for, and a searching investigation was to be immediately made.—On another Scotch line, the North British, between East Linton and Donbar, no less than three bridges have given way; but the ruin here is attributed to the heavy rains, which swelled the river Tyne, and other smaller streams over which the line was carried by the bridges, which have thus been proved to have been insufficient to meet contingencies which ought to have been foreseen and well provided for. Other derivations were at the same time committed by the flood, such as the destruction of a large portion of an embankment connected with two of the bridges. No personal injury occurred. The expense, it is said, will fall upon the contractors, who were bound to maintain their works for a year from the opening of the line.—In returning southwards, we observe that, on Thursday week, a portion of a tunnel gave way on the Newcastle and North Shields line. That portion of the Tynemouth extension railway works, opposite to the east end of Northumberland-square, had been left in an unfinished state, and the recent heavy rains are said to have destroyed nearly twenty yards of tunnel there in course of erection.—On the Reading and Newbury there appear to have been so continual a succession of casualties that, in general terms, we are told, "that the works on this line have hitherto been greatly impeded by the falling of bridges, arches, &c., and the sinking in of others." Some of these accidents, it is said, have been caused by the too hasty removal of temporary buttresses and supporters; others, by the insufficiency of the foundations, laid on light or peaty soil, or sub-soil, and the weight of the structures pressing on such sub-soil and foundations.

In reference to the accident on the Tynemouth extension Railway, it has been stated that the failure occurred from the tunnel having been constructed with inferior materials, and the erroneous principles adopted in the formation, facilitated by the accumulation of water which settled in the haunches of the arch.

Whatever may have been the cause, there appear to have been some grievous errors somewhere; one of the principal of which was the employment of ordinary *lime-mortar* instead of cement in setting the brickwork, of which the arch is composed; and when it is considered that this mortar never had the chance of setting, by the action of the atmosphere, having been covered up with soil and other substances immediately after the tunnel was formed, need we wonder for one moment that the water acted upon it, and that the accident took place. Had good Roman cement been used, the arch would now have been standing perfectly secure, even if a deluge of water had passed over it.

Some remonstrance is necessary to railway proprietors, their engineers, and architects, in order to warn them in their future works to employ proper materials, and not put the lives of her Majesty's liege subjects in jeopardy by ill-constructed works, upon which no confidence whatever can be placed.

In adverting to the insufficiency of foundations, and the injudicious choice of materials, we may safely conclude that the fall of the bridges on the North British, must have been in a great measure owing to defective foundations and improper materials having been employed; and *en passant*, it may not be out of place here to observe, that in all works under water, or where there is a probability of water coming in contact with them, *hydraulic lime*, or *good Roman cement* should in every instance be adopted.

RAILWAY BANKRUPTCY.—A flat of bankruptcy has been opened against the Tring, Reading, and Basingstoke Railway Company, the shareholders having determined upon "winding up" the scheme, and resolving that the dissolution should be considered as an act of bankruptcy. This being the first flat issued under the 9th & 10th Victoria, cap. 28, it has excited much interest among parties who have identified themselves with the late railway speculation.

JEPHSON GARDENS' COMPETITION.

SIR,—Although we are very far from wishing to enter into a controversy with any parties upon the above subject, on which so much has already been said in this neighbourhood, we beg you will do us the justice to insert the few following remarks upon a paragraph which appeared in last week's *Builder*. It is there stated, that the plan selected as No. 1, was "subsequently considered impracticable." We would, in the first place, ask by whom the plan was proved to be impracticable; and, secondly, who decided that its impracticability had been proved? We have never been consulted as to its practicability, nor do we yet know that any decision in the matter has been given. So far from considering that there is anything impracticable in it ourselves, we are so perfectly willing and desirous of proving its *practicability* to all parties who may wish it, whether interested therein or otherwise, that we will at any time attend with them upon the ground, and demonstrate the perfect feasibility of carrying out the plan, whether as regards its constructiveness or otherwise. We would not have intruded ourselves upon your notice, had we not considered that our silence might have been construed into acquiescence in the imputation that we were the designers of an impracticable plan; which is an imputation which we think you will allow no man ought to permit to pass unnoticed, unless the accusation were true.—We are, Sir, &c.

HARTON & WILLS.

Leamington, 5th Oct. 1846.

IS THE STATUE TO REMAIN?

SIR,—Having in my avocations often to pass Hyde-park Corner, and being in fear that on each future occasion my feelings may be pained, I assume the right, in self defence, to endeavour to avert the possibility; for incongruity, in the fine arts especially, must always cause pain in the beholder, as is but too ostensibly demonstrated, at present, by the equestrian statue upon Burton's archway, on Constitution Hill. The disproportion of the one to the other—the statue to the pedestal (the arch)—is infinitely greater than I had anticipated prior to the elevation; and as that disproportion an overpowers the pedestal, now that the large timbers hide portions of its form, how much more glaring and offensive to good taste must it be when denuded of them, and its full extent of size shall remain in no degree concealed? These relative disproportions are only fully observable on the south side, and may be well noticed from the extremity of the first heading of the road of Constitution Hill; then afterwards, approaching the pedestal, which becomes, perspective, as you near it, a larger object, the statue is of course perspective smaller, and disproportion in the exact ratio of approach diminishes, and the actual discrepancy, when close to the gateway, ceases therefore to be so offensive. However, to shew to what extent the proportions are irrelevant, the beholder should then proceed to the north side, and place himself just within the iron railing next the carriage road, opposite the figure of Achilles, so as to have the top of the middle gate of Hyde-park squaring with the plinth on which the horse is placed, and the eye will immediately rest on a harmony of proportions. By this means the real pedestal is entirely shut out, the screen of Hyde-park becomes at once associated with the plinth of the statue, and a pedestal apparently extends the whole continuation of the screen, of which the statue and its plinth form a pyramidal centre.

There is another painful discordance, in relation of the statue with the pedestal, by which the former suffers much in its colossal grandeur. The arch is constructed with an appearance of lightness, being hollowed by a lofty gateway, and ornamented with small Corinthian columns and pilasters, with other delicate corresponding architectural beauties. All these well exemplify its intention, that of a decorative triumphal arch; and as clearly its inapplicability to be burdened by an enormous weight; the mind therefore mistrusts the idea, that the gigantic form which has been imposed upon it, weighs forty tons, imagining that if it did so, a more solid, substantial, and characteristic basement would have been constructed for its reception.